Jacks Creek / Sitkin Smelting & Refining, Inc.

EPA Region 3
Pennsylvania
Mifflin County
In Maitland

EPA ID# PAD980829493

5th Congressional District

Last Update: August 2002

Other Names:
Sitkin Smelting Refining Inc.

Current Site Status

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is overseeing the cleanup of the Jacks Creek site. In January 1999, the approximately 110 parties responsible for site contamination (PRPs), the present owner, the EPA, and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection signed a consent decree to develop plans for the site's cleanup. An early Phase I cleanup was completed August 9 2001. The cleanup included cleaning the church yard area adjacent to the site, demolishing dilapidated buildings, and removing underground storage tanks, ash material, transformers and the staging of drums until the contents are characterized and properly disposed of.

During the Summer and Fall of 2002, additional remedial activities are being performed at the Site. Lead-contaminated soils exhibiting contaminant levels above 40,000 parts per million (ppm) will be excavated, and stabilized on the Site. A dike will be constructed around a lead-contaminated sediment deposit to prevent loss of the deposit into Jack’s Creek during potential future storm events. The

deposit will be permanently addressed during 2003 remedial activities. EPA and the PRP's environmental consultant will perform a site visit to prepare a sediment sampling plan to evaluate the impact of the Site on Jack's Creek. It should be noted that lead contamination on-site is ubiquitous. Therefore, during on-site remedial activities, lead will be considered the indicator compound for other site contaminants. The implementation of a remedy that successfully addresses lead contamination will be assumed to be a sufficient remedy for all other on-site contaminants.

Site Description

The 105-acre Jacks Creek site is located in the village of Maitland in a rural farming area of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. The site is a former smelting and precious metals reclamation facility. Sitkin Smelting Company operated at the site from 1958 until 1977. A portion of the site property is currently used for a metal scrap yard and an aluminum recycling facility. The site consists of a complex assortment of buildings, waste piles, scrap metal, and large areas of soil contaminated with heavy metals. Land surrounding the site is used for both residential and agricultural purposes. Jacks Creek is adjacent to the site on the northwest property boundary. Approximately 1,000 people live within three miles of the site, the majority of them are using private wells for their drinking water supply.

Site Responsibility

Cleanup of this site is the responsible of federal and state governments and potentially responsible parties.

NPL Listing History

Our country's most serious, uncontrolled, or abandoned hazardous waste sites can be cleaned using federal money. To be eligible for federal cleanup money, a site must be put on the National Priorities List. This site was proposed to the list on June 24, 1988 and formally added to the list on October 4, 1989.

Threats and Contaminants

Sampling results indicate that lead and other metals are present at low levels in on-site groundwater. On-site soils contain high levels of

numerous metals such as lead, copper, zinc, cadmium, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The sediments of Jacks Creek near the site contains lead and PCBs. People using Jacks Creek for recreation, such as fishermen, could be exposed to chemicals in the water through direct contact or by eating contaminated fish. A fish consumption advisory was issued April of 1999 by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, advising a one meal per month for brown trout, bluegill, rock bass, fallfish and white suckers from portion of Jacks Creek adjacent to the site.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html EXIT disclaimer

Cleanup Progress

In 1991, EPA built berms on the site to control the erosion of on-site soils and waste piles into Jacks Creek. A plastic cover was placed on the largest waste pile to contain wastes left over from smelting operations. Low-level radioactive switches were removed from the site. Additionally, hazardous chemicals were also removed from an on-site building.

A 1990 study determined the nature and extent of contamination, and identified the best approaches for final cleanup at the site. Surface soils were found to be contaminated with heavy metals including antimony, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, selenium, silver and zinc, and also organic contaminants including (PCBs). Lead levels as high as 159,000 parts per million (ppm) were detected in on-site soils, and large areas of the site are consistently above 10,000 ppm.

A de minimis settlement, which included 113 PRPs, was agreed to in September 1994. A total of $3.7 million was collected from all the parties in this settlement. Over two hundred PRPs at this site either refused the settlement offer, or are not eligible for a de minimis settlement. Special Notice Letters were sent to all PRPs who were not included in the 1994 de minimis settlement. Included in these letters was an Orphan Share Offer. An orphan share is the financial responsibility assigned to a PRP who is insolvent or defunct, and unaffiliated with other viable liable PRPs (Sitkin Smelting in this case).

Orphan share compensation provides a major incentive for responsible parties to perform cleanups and settle claims quickly without litigation, and reduces transaction costs by wholly or partly resolving the question of who should bear the burden of orphan shares. A good faith offer from this PRP group was received by EPA in December 1997.

EPA issued a proposed plan for the entire site February 27, 1997. The public comment period closed April 28, 1997. A Record of Decision was issued September 30, 1997. EPA's selected remedy includes "hot spot" treatment of highly-contaminated soils at an off-site treatment facility and on-site consolidation and capping of the waste piles and the remaining contaminated soils. Sediments from depositional areas of Jacks Creek exceeding 110 ppm lead in the immediate vicinity of the site shall be removed from the creek by vacuum dredging, and then consolidated with the waste piles and contaminated soils. Fish consumption advisories were issued for portions of Jacks Creek adjacent to the site. One-fifth of an acre of wetlands will be recreated in an on-site location. Long-term monitoring of the ground and surface water, as well as the fish and benthic organisms in Jacks Creek, shall be done as part of the operation and maintenance of the site.

An early Phase I cleanup was completed August 9, 2001. The cleanup included cleaning the church yard area adjacent to the site, demolishing dilapidated buildings, and removing underground storage tanks, ash material, transformers and the staging of drums until the contents are characterized and properly disposed of. The Repsonsible Parties submitted a Ninety Percent Design for the rest of the cleanup October 2001. EPA and PADEP provided comments on the Ninety Percent Design and are awaiting response to the comments from the responsible parties to move forward with the final design.

During 1991 drum consolidation activities at the northwest corner of the former incinerator pad, a puddle of "green-tar-like" material was observed beneath several drum of green-colored soil. A solvent-odor was detected during drum removal activities. Samples of this green-tar material indicated the presence of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), PCBs, and Copper. On November 13, 2001, 40 cubic yards of the green-tar material was excavated and placed directly into a covered roll-off container. Confirmatory soil sampling and field

observations confirmed that the extent of this green-tar material had been removed from the Site. On December 26, 2001, 38-tons of green-tar material were removed from the Site under hazardous waste manifest and transported to CWM Chemical Services of Model City, New York for treatment and disposal.

EPA has recently taken legal action to obtain access to the eastern portion of the Site, where the multi-layer cap will be located. Legal action was necessary because of the absence of an owner for that portion of the Site.

Contacts

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Detailed public files (Administrative Record) on EPA's actions and decisions for this site can be examined at the following locations:

Mifflin County Library
123 North Wayne St.
Lewistown, PA 17044
717-242-2391

U.S. EPA Region III
6th Floor Docket Room
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Please call for an appointment.